

**THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART
CLEVELAND 6. OHIO**

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Paul Mooney 11.12.60
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One of the most important paintings accessioned by The Cleveland Museum of Art in the past few years is THE HOLY HOUSE OF NAZARETH by Zurbaran, the great Spanish painter of the mid-seventeenth century.

An awesome beauty marks the figures in the composition. The figures are the Virgin and Christ Child. Quiet resignation shows in every line of the Virgin's startlingly beautiful face - three brilliant tears rest momentarily on her cheek. Although seated she gives an impression of great height. This effect is achieved through the arrangement of the rich heavy silk of her gown and the position in which she sits. Her gown is ruby-colored and a diaphanous citron-colored scarf is loosely draped about her neck. Across her knees lies a stark white cloth - of the white for which Zurbaran was renowned. Before her on the floor is a sewing basket containing bits of white and blue silk. The gown of the Christ Child is fashioned of a muted blue silk and a crown of thorns rests on his lap. He has pricked his finger and is pressing a drop of blood from it. Angels hover over him.

Easter lilies and pale roses are in a vase on the left of the Virgin and two impressive doves are at her feet. On her right is a table with an open drawer. On the table are three casually placed books and two pears.

Francisco de Zurbaran, the son of a well-to-do shopkeeper of Basque descent, was born in 1598 in the lonely region of Extremadura in Western Spain. In 1614 he was apprenticed to the painter Villanueva in Seville. He later was appointed Court painter to Philip IV. He died in 1664. His birthplace had a noticeable influence on his work. Space, strong colors, luminous whites, virile people, serene and silent, are all to be found in Western Spain - and in his work.

THE HOLY HOUSE OF NAZARETH is an oil on canvas, 65 by 85-7/8" in size, and came from the collection of the Count of Walterstorff (Minister of Denmark to the French Court) and was purchased from the Leonard C. Hanna, Jr. Bequest.

M. 11.2.60 - 3 Critics
11.9.60 - Special